

CHAPTER 12

THE AUTOPSY X-RAYS AND EVIDENCE OF FORGERY

If you draw a line on your head from the top of one ear across the top of your head to the other ear, that is roughly where the coronal suture is, which is a juncture of the frontal bone or plate of the skull, comprising the forehead, and the two major bones posterior to that on the left and right side of the skull. Those are the parietal bones, separated by the sagittal suture. The sagittal suture runs front to back from the coronal suture to the occipital bone.

In 1977 a panel of doctors, anthropologists, and a dentist met privately at the National Archives with two of the autopsy doctors, James Humes, and Thornton Boswell. There ensued the most major official discussion ever to occur among the witnesses up to then about the evidence. They had the alleged autopsy photographs and X-rays with them, and this discussion with regard to the skull X-rays nos. 1,3, and 6 followed.

"Well, I think the question that we all have is whether this is anterior to the coronal suture, or posterior to it," Dr. Petty said. He was talking about whether the large hole in the President's head was forward of the right ear, or behind it.

"Oh, there was damage that far forward?" Dr. Angel asked. He was an anthropologist from the Smithsonian Institution, unfortunately now deceased. Angel was aware of the evidence that the back of the President's head was missing. He had before him photographs which showed no damage to the face or the back of the head, but he had conflicting X-rays showing the right front of the face missing.

"I believe so. I think the damage is quite apparent here in the lateral view of the skull by X-ray." Petty said.

"Yes, that's right." Angel said, with a sort of bitter irony, as he could read the X-ray.

Dr. Baden then confirmed for us that the frontal bone was indeed missing: "And also on X-ray No. 1, the anterior-posterior view, right side."

"In that case, I'm puzzled by the missing bone here and the angles...." Angel said. After a bit, he said "What's bothering me is what part of the flesh is that?" "That's the cheek, the right cheek."

"If that's the right cheek then it can't be--has to be more or less."

"Yeah."

"It's really hard to be sure, square this with the X-ray which shows so much bone lost in this right frontal area." (7 HSCA 249)

Humes makes it clear then that the X-rays were taken before

any "manipulations were performed." (7 HSCA 249) In a moment, Angel, still doing God's work, said, "So, in that case this exit wound is really in the frontal--its in front of that notch there--it's in the frontal, see what I mean, it would have to be about here." (7 HSCA 250)

And a bit later, Dr. Petty says, "so that placing the outshoot wound in the right frontal bone toward the coronal suture is probably about where it was.."

Humes: "Uh-huh." (p. 251)

Out of boredom, Humes and Boswell went passively along with placing the large exit wound in the front of the head, but they were not totally dead. They protested vigorously on other points that the X-rays and photographs showed, and they claimed that three weeks beforehand, photos turned up which they were told about. "And we never had the privilege of examining the fragments or photographs of this fragment that you now examined until this afternoon, and I was unaware of its existence until about 3 weeks ago." (p. 248) How convenient. In 1966 these same autopsy doctors spent some hours in the National Archives cataloging and marking each and every photograph and X-ray, and now all of a sudden, like the palm print on the alleged Oswald murder rifle, a new photograph shows up eleven years later and three weeks before this meeting!

Humes got very hot about the fact that the interior chest photographs were missing. Both he and Boswell got very hot about the attempts by everyone to move the entry wound four inches from where they had placed it at the autopsy.

A proof of the forgery, of the enormous lies that are being perpetrated on us is the fact that in the above discussion there is a description of the large defect in the back of the head, the exit wound that everyone is trying to pretend is no longer there. Dr. Davis points it out to all: "We can see in X-ray film No. 2 extending in an upward direction from the region of the external occipital protuberance, with the upper portion of this in an area where there's a large defect in the posterior parietal bone." The plain truth is, there could not have been an entry wound where they are trying to move it--into the cowlick of the head four inches above where it was observed at the autopsy--because there was no bone on that part of the back/top of the head.

The very next sentence Dr. Davis utters is even more revealing: "Now, there is radiopaque material, some of which appears to be even exterior..." Remember that the X-ray tech from the autopsy was made to tape pieces of bullet fragments to pieces of bone the next day and X-ray them. (see chapter on Custer) The Clark Panel found in 1968 that there was a large part of a bullet embedded on the outer table of the skull.

THE KRON-TV SHOW

In 1988, several witnesses at President Kennedy's autopsy at Bethesda Naval Hospital came forward and spoke publicly on KRON-TV, in San Francisco, to the central issue of the authenticity of the autopsy photographs and X-rays which is raised in this book. What they said was startling.

Jerrold Custer, the man who took the X-rays at Bethesda, was shown copies of them by Sylvia Chase of KRON, who asked, "Is this the X-ray picture that you took and is this the wound that you saw on the President?" "No. This area here was gone. (demonstrating the back of the head) There was no scalp there. Not this area," he said emphatically, pointing out the very large missing area on the right in front of the ear in the alleged X-rays. "I don't believe this is the autopsy X-ray." He demonstrated from the front top of the head all the way back to the back of the neck: "This part of the head was gone." Custer very strongly disputed the photographs and X-rays, as did the others.

Custer said, "from the top of the head to the base of the skull. That part was gone."

The X-rays alleged to be of Kennedy are not his and are substituted. The man who took the X-rays at Bethesda, Jerrold Custer, told me exactly what he told Sylvia Chase on KRON-TV in San Francisco. He took a lot of time to observe the wounds: "There was a large hole in the back of the head, and there was a big hole in the scalp there." I asked Custer, "in other words, that photo of the back of the head--which is in some dispute--would have shown that, if the scalp was shredded and macerated as you describe, it would have shown that in the photographs?" "Absolutely!" "But what you saw was an actual hole in the scalp itself in the very back of the head, in the occipital area where the large defect was?" "Right."

I asked him if he had seen the Walter Cronkite show on the assassination. "That was very superficial." "But was a flap of scalp there that could have been pulled up to cover the hole in the very back of the head?" Custer replied, "There was a king size hole in the back of the head, and that area was torn." From their observations at the autopsy at the time, Custer and the other Navy enlisted men all thought that the President had been shot from in front, and that the large hole in the back of the head was an exit. They themselves were quite stunned when they heard the results of the Warren Commission findings and what the autopsy report said--not entirely in line with each other, either.

"Do you feel that the X-rays--you're absolutely sure in your own mind that they don't show what you saw that night?"

"Let's put it this way--in the lateral skull films it looks like part of the front of his face is gone. But if you look at the autopsy photographs, there's nothing gone there. His eye

should have been completely gone on that film, which it never should."

THE AUTHENTICATOR

The House Select Committee on Assassinations made a stab at authenticating the skull X-rays. It all boiled down to 2 teeth and a sinus cavity. Nobody inquired whether or not those parts of the skull the forensic dentists compared to dental X-rays supposed to be that of JFK were parts of composite X-rays made just for this purpose.

On July 18, 1991, I attempted to talk to Dr. Lowell Levine, the forensic dentist who worked on the famous Josef Mengele case, and who was used by the House Assassinations Committee. I say attempted, because for me it was a very tough interview. I never got close to the technical questions because Levine--who works for the New York State Police--was too defensive, too much on the attack, too much in control, and not open to any real discussion. Dr. Levine's report on his authentication of the skull X-rays 1,2, and 3 are in Volume Seven of the HSCA, page 53. (see also public testimony, Sept 7, 1978, 1 HSCA p. 149)

He told me that he saw the original X-rays. I asked him, or tried to, "the original...the whole entire..."

"The whole...the whole original X-rays, there, there's absolutely nothing wrong with them."

"For the entire head, you mean?"

"Yeah...They could not publish them intact. They were not allowed. they're owned by the family. WHO'RE YOU WITH?"

"I'm a freelance."

"The X-rays--there's absolutely nothing peculiar about 'em. We examined the original X-rays."

I tried to explain to Levine that the X-rays of the skull showed the whole right front of the face missing. I asked him how come there was so much bone missing, if they either cropped them or blacked them out somehow. "They had to be cropped," he explained, which of course had nothing to do with why the bone was missing. But cropping them was one more example of tainting the evidence, putting a fog over the public's ability to adequately perceive the evidence. They didn't want the public to know what really happened.

The X-rays were faked to show a blow out in that part of the head. Cropping them made my job that much more difficult.

"Is there a reason why?"

"Yeah...because they were not allowed by the owners of the X-rays to publish the entire picture....there's absolutely zippo...nothing wrong with the films."

Later: "I can tell you absolutely, positively, totally 110 percent the X-rays were of Kennedy...Okay...they totally comported with everything that ah, with the findings of the panel." He sidestepped saying that they compared with the dental

X-rays or whatever else he had.

He said that he did not think it peculiar that they found three envelopes of dental X-rays in the White House rather than in a dentist's office. "Prominent people want it that way," he said. "I have no problem with that. I don't remember a whole lot but there was nothing unusual about 'em."

He told me that he was present during the interview with Humes and Boswell, the two autopsy pathologists, when they were interviewed by the panel of doctors for the House Committee. Not long after this interview with Levine, I talked to Dr. Earl Rose who was there also, and who had been the medical examiner of Dallas the day he tried to stop them from taking the body out of Texas.

I tried to reason with Levine: "Well, then, you are aware that they (Humes and Boswell) were insisting that the entry wound in the back of the head was nowhere near where it was in that X-ray and the panel commented on the persistent disparity between its findings and those of the autopsy pathologists who said that the entrance wound was at or near the occipital protuberance and it was found to be 4 inches higher than that on the X-rays...Don't you think it was rather peculiar when the autopsy doctors were rather desperately trying to say..." he cut me off:

"But they were not forensic pathologists...they did not, ahhh." There it is again. They made a mistake. They did make mistakes, but they could not be wrong about everything. They certainly would have seen and noted a bullet hole in the skull where it now is, rather than four inches from there. Especially since there was no bone in that part of the head. After all, they had a competent radiologist at the autopsy who was interpreting the films, and they had the head of the deceased in their hands. They would see and find the bullet hole, which they did, but not anywhere near where it now is.

"And another thing, Dr. Pierre Finck who was at the autopsy and who collaborated on all the reports with Humes and Boswell, (so we are told) was a forensic pathologist. He apparently came to the above meeting all the way from his home in Geneva, and then shortly walked out, bored.

"Mr. Livingstone, look, let me, if I may, 'cause I'm not going to get in an argument with you. I'll give you my discernment, then I'm gonna go."

"Sure."

"Ok. It's not unusual, Okay? I see it where non forensic pathologists or hospital pathologists...very different you know...do this not infrequently in cases that we deal with everyday. Okay, in other words, one of my jobs...we're reviewers of things that are produced by non-forensic people and it is not an unusual occurrence at all. The thing is...at 14 or 15 years ago, you know, no matter what is done, you know you're a theorist, I mean I can tell you you're wasting your time--or I

think so. The medical evidence was very obvious. It was very simple and its the type of stuff we look at all the time."

"Let me ask you in the frontal part of the skull X-ray that you saw...did you see that the bone was missing, or was it present?"

"I don't recall."

This was the beginning of a major memory problem with him. He couldn't recall from then on, and he didn't hang up.

"On the right side."

"I don't recall right now, you know, and I'd have to go back and look at the report, but it was...what I can tell you is my recollection is...and write it down...that the X-rays totally comported with the findings of the pathology panel." Which, said findings, of course, were almost totally dependent on his X-rays. Catch No. 22.

I mentioned that a radiologist told me that there appeared to be surgery to the edges of the frontal bone in the temple, and that bone was missing there, not to speak of to the rest of the right front face. Mark Crouch noted the same thing in a different area--on the forehead, and he had been told by a doctor that it looked like nippers had been used there. These are the type of clippers that clip through skull bone.

"There was absolutely no surgery to the skull." Of course this dentist was not a forensic pathologist, so he couldn't know what he was saying.

We then got into a new form of Catch 22. This dealt with whether or not my radiologist friends had seen the original X-rays. His position was that if we didn't look at the original material we couldn't know what we were talking about. "You have to look at the original material," he said.

"You know that we can't."

"Just file a Freedom of Information Act suit," he said.

Then he started dropping names. His credentials were being on the Mengele case in 1979. This highly dubious information presented in an ad hominem argument, about the former Nazi death camp doctor who helped kill so many helpless people was supposed to give him the authority his discussion with me lacked. I told him that "the presumption is that this material is a forgery."

"Mr. Livingstone--"

"Yeah?"

"I'm not going to get in an argument with you."

"No, I don't want to...I'm just trying to tell you the opposing viewpoint..."

"Well, let me tell you, I've been involved with subsequently other things with Mengele and things like that...what I'm telling you--its all interesting--but you're barking up the wrong tree." No, but I am a dog with a bone. Don't press a button in my brain by throwing in Hitler for weight and authority. I'm not scared.

"Ah, huh," I said instead.

"You know, feel free to do whatever you want, but--"

"Do you have a basis for saying that?"

"Sure, I looked at the original evidence and you haven't."

"Well, if that evidence..."

"I've got no other comment. The evidence that I looked at the X-rays films, were absolutely, positively normal X-rays films that are taken everyday and not tampered with. If your chief radiologist friend can figure out a way that--after he looks at the original films, if he does..."

"Did you see the photographs of the face--the President's face?"

"Yes."

"And did his face look normal to you?"

"You know, I don't recall, but all I tell you--"

"But you'd remember if there was damage to his face?"

I...once again...I don't recall off the top of my head. Believe it or not...you know this may sound unusually--we're talking about 14 years ago, and I've probably seen thousands of cases." Man, if he can't remember what the face of the President of the United States looked like in the autopsy photographs, he should be retired.

"All right, let's put it this way, do you have any reason to believe his face was damaged?"

"I don't recall off the top of my head, you know, and I'd have to go back and..."

"Is there any medical testimony that his face was damaged?" I asked him.

"I do not recall, once again. As I said, you can do whatever you want but do not quote me--you know, inaccurately."

"Yes, but what I am trying to find out is if what you saw is similar to what they printed showing that the right front of the face is missing. That is the question here because, as you must know, there is no evidence what-so-ever from anybody, in fact to the contrary, everyone said his face was perfect, it was undamaged and in the photographs it is undamaged."

"You're telling me that the right front of his face was missing?"

"The skull that you verified as authentic has no right front of the face. The eye is missing, the right forehead, the right temple."

"Once again, the skull that I verified is authentic. You know by comparing it with the dental X-rays."

"What you verified was the jaw." I told him.

"What you need to do is to look at the original X-ray films. Okay? In other words, the original X-rays films are correct. If your friend is trying to interpret things from photographic material..."

"Well, we are unable to get at that material, as you know."

"I don't know!" (He doesn't want to!)

"Yeah."

"I mean, you're telling me things that I know, that I don't know."

"No legitimate researchers in this case have been able to obtain this material."

"I resent that! 'Cause I'm legitimate. You're implying that I'm, ah, am..."

I apologized and explained that I was talking about independent outside observers. That didn't work, either.

"Let me tell you what--everybody there were independent outside observers...okay...'cause you know you were paid an honorarium doesn't make you a shill for the government. You know, I resent that implication. We weren't bought and paid for."

"You weren't paid for what you did?"

"Well, we were paid...but I mean we weren't bought and paid for."

Soon, he was back at it: "If you haven't learned, you know, that you've got to look at the original evidence."

"It's not subject to the F.O.I.A., you should know that. Its a contract with the Kennedy family and the National Archives and no F.O.I.A. suit applies."

These people get you running around in circles. He has already stated that there was an agreement with the Kennedy family that precluded showing the X-rays. He told us that he and the Committee were not allowed to show the full skull X-rays. But he is going to beat me over the head with a lie, telling me that I would be able to get access if I only but file a Freedom of Information Act request.

The interview was within moments of its termination, and yet twice more he tried to send me to the original evidence. "I'm trying to help you by telling you that unless you see that--unless you see the original material." And "I've gotta go, but you take a look at the original evidence...."

Then WHY did the House Committee publish poor and perhaps incomplete photographs of the X-rays at all? What do they prove other than to create a new storm of controversy by showing the right front face missing? Although I must say nobody noticed it but me. This says that there is something seriously wrong with the press and some other institutions in this country. It says that a lot of us are trained either not to ask questions or ask the wrong ones. It also would seem to tell us that somebody on the Committee made sure that enough information did slip through the cracks to both stimulate and allow the real investigation that myself and some others are conducting to go forward.